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SUBJECT: STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP SECURITY WORKING GROUP
FOCUSES ON ANSF DEVELOPMENT, SECURITY ASSISTANCE PLANNING,
MOI REFORM

¶1. (SBU) Summary: The February 15 Strategic Partnership Working Group meeting ranged broadly over issues related to building Afghan National Security Force capacity and increasing security sector links. The discussion covered the growth, equipping, and capacity building of both the army and police, with a particular emphasis on training and long-term programs, including the need for an Afghan vision for the security forces based on a threat assessment. The Afghan side warmly welcomed the U.S. delegation and expressed its support of the Security Partnership as an expression of the commitment of the United States to Afghanistan. Both sides agreed that the Working Group talks were very productive and set the stage for a successful Plenary meeting. End summary.

¶2. (SBU) The Security Working Group of the U.S.-Afghanistan Strategic Partnership met on February 15 in Kabul. The meeting was co-chaired by Minister of Defense (MOD) Wardak and Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Shinn. Attendance on the Afghan

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side included Deputy Minister of Interior Khalid and senior officials of the Ministries of Defense and Interior as well as a representative from the National Directorate of Security. The U.S. delegation included Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Senior Advisor for Central Asia Mitchell Shivers, Afghanistan Policy Director John Kreul and Country Director Madeline LePage from the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, Commander Gene Black from the Joint Staff J5/Central and South Asia Division, and Brett Floro from Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA Combined Security Transition Command - Afghanistan (CSTC-A) Deputy Commanding General for Pol-Mil Affairs and Deputy Commanding General for Programs represented CSTC-A. Polmiloff represented the U.S. Embassy and Department of State.

Introductory Remarks

13. (SBU) MOD Wardak opened the meeting by stating that the U.S. and Afghanistan had common goals, and that the Strategic Partnership was the beginning of a new era of cooperation. The agreement was a great political victory for the Afghan people, he said, and this meeting was the first step in working out the practical steps to implement it. He emphasized the need for a long-term vision so that Afghanistan can work toward the goal of independent self-defense, citing the costs on the US of continued presence in Afghanistan, and the Afghan desire to one day be an allied provider of assistance to the US. PDASD Shinn reviewed the Security Working Group agenda, emphasizing the connections between the topics and the declaration: there are 6 topics to cover, the first 4 fit together as capacity building and the last 2 to build ongoing links between our governments.

Afghanistan National Security Forces (ANSF) Development

14. (SBU) Commander Black briefed on the status of ANSF development, including the plan to increase the size of the Afghan National Army (ANA) and the Afghan National Police (ANP) and supply better equipment. It was agreed that U.S. support for the ANA and ANP not only builds Afghan capacity, it also sends a message to our enemies that we are committed to a long-term partnership. Several challenges were identified, including the need to establish a red-amber-green

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troop rotation cycle, which will require a larger number of ANA troops to backfill those on leave and training (it was noted that the British keep a full company for each platoon deployed in Helmand, so that troops can be rotated out of the battle); increased ability of ANA to rapidly come to the assistance of ANP, which will require increasing ANA airlift capability; and the tremendous needs of the ANP - and with them, the need for the ANP leadership to commit to making necessary changes so that it can benefit from the new resources being requested from the USG by CSTC-A. Deputy Minister Khalid emphasized that it is important for all Afghan National Police to be trained and equipped to address narcotics, not just the Counternarcotics Police Afghanistan (CNPA). MOD Wardak alluded to his desire to increase the size of the ANA.

Security Assistance

15. (SBU) In his briefing on security assistance, Brett Floro explained that to prepare for the time when procurement procedures return to the authorities of the Foreign Military Sales program, the ANA will need to develop the personnel to take over many of the duties now performed by CSTC-A. Minister Wardak said that in order to develop a weapons procurement program that meets Afghanistan's needs, the GOA will need to articulate its long-term vision for the ANA. This vision needs to be based on a threat-based assessment of Afghanistan's security needs. Wardak committed to provide a framework presentation at the Strategic Partnership plenary meeting. Subsequent Security Working Group meetings will flesh out the details.

Professional Military Education (PME)

¶6. (SBU) After a brief by Commander Black on PME programs available to ANA personnel both in the U.S. (International Military Education and Training or IMET) and at the Kabul Military Training Center (KMTC), discussion turned to how best to meet the needs of the younger generation of military officers and NCOs. The Afghan side emphasized the need to focus on English language training for ANA personnel, since without sufficient language skills the training recipients are not able to derive full benefit from the instruction they receive. Another key point was the lack of capacity in the non-combat ranks of the ANA, requiring heavy reliance on contractors for such support functions as maintenance. Minister Wardak remarked that it would be useful to formalize a comprehensive training regimen in Afghanistan to prepare future military leaders, starting with junior officers and technical support staff and only gradually shifting emphasis to senior training. Deputy Minister Khalid noted that there is no equivalent to KMTC or IMET advanced leadership programs for the ANP and said that much more needs to be done to develop advanced police training.

MOI Anti-Corruption Efforts

¶7. (SBU) Deputy Minister Khalid gave a presentation on Ministry of Interior (MOI) reform efforts and the link to anti-corruption programs. While admitting that professionalizing the MOI remains a big task, he pointed out that significant progress has been made in the last 12 months, including removing a number of

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corrupt or incompetent police chiefs and instituting new systems for recruiting and vetting as well as pay and rank reform. It was agreed that these improvements need to be systematized with an ANP personnel program that provides for promotions and career-enhancing assignments, but that also provides a way to remove non-performing officers without the need for extensive involvement of the Minister and Deputy Minister. In addition, the Afghan side emphasized the need for more progress in the justice sector, so that those who are criminally malfeasant can be prosecuted. Deputy Minister Khalid said that accountability needed to start at the top, by punishing corrupt senior leadership. He emphasized that corruption is the most serious problem faced by Afghanistan and is also a security issue, since it emboldens the enemy and disheartens the police on the ground.

Parliamentary Exchange and Defense Cooperation Forum

¶8. (SBU) Two programs proposed at the March 2006 Strategic Partnership talks were reviewed by the Working Group. Regarding the Interparliamentary Exchange on Defense Issues, Minister Wardak said he welcomed the program as an opportunity to increase the understanding of Members of Parliament regarding their responsibilities in the security area so that they can play a constructive role in cooperation with the executive branch. On the Defense Cooperation Forum concept, Wardak said that was an excellent proposal and that the Afghan side viewed the Forum as an additional assurance that the partnership will remain vital and Afghanistan would not be forgotten. Regarding the draft Terms of Reference presented by the U.S. side, Wardak said that the GOA is agreed on the principle and the details of planning the meetings can be worked out separately.

Conclusion

¶9. (SBU) In concluding the session, Minister Wardak and PDASD Shinn both agreed that the meeting had been very useful and had set the stage for the Plenary session. Senior Advisor Shivers reviewed the key points of the meeting, with an emphasis on continued cooperation and equal partnership between the U.S. and Afghanistan. Both sides left this session with a sense that solidification of the partnership continues.

¶10. (U) PDASD Shinn cleared this cable.

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